

DUNBAR HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

DISCUSSION ON PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

MONDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2014

Assistant Town Planner Dan Kops presented to the DHCA membership followed by a Q & A period. There were 16 individuals in attendance. The following are general statements and questions raised by the attendees as well as the responses by Dan or others present:

What goals were achieved from the last POCD?

The plan is being reviewed and information gathered. Findings will become part of the new POCD.

In relation to building heights, a question was asked about a 2009 survey.

Goals expressed in the 2004 POCD required the zoning regulations to be revised. The updates to the zoning regulations included the Smart code which encourages mixed use, walkable developments and allows much denser development. The zoning regulations were extensively revised in 2009 and become effective January 1, 2010, requiring the POCD to be amended in sections.

Would like to see more bike lanes. The area surrounding the plaza is very pedestrian unfriendly.

What is going on at the former sight of Stop & Shop on lower Dixwell Avenue?

Stop & Shop still holds the lease on the property and does not want competitors going in. The same issue holds true of Toys R Us in the Hamden Mart.

The southern end of Hamden is in need of help – something needs to be done.

The Planning and Zoning Commission has held a lot of discussions surrounding this issue; however there are limits to what the government can do. We need private investors.

Has any thought been given to the pending disaster to Woodin Street with the opening of roads from the New Haven redevelopment projects?

The Planning and Zoning Commission and the Town of Hamden do not have regulatory jurisdiction over these roads. There are federal laws that govern this.

What about the “conservation” phase of the POCD? Has there been any movement in identifying open space and ensuring no development?

The Town has acquired a fair amount of open space property over the past several years as has the State. Bill Doheny added that there are about 70 additional acres the State is in the process of acquiring in Hamden.

There is also architectural conservation, where citizens want to ensure the appearance of the neighborhoods remains unchanged.

Dan added that the Hamden Land Trust has played an important role in acquiring open space.

Does the Plan cover wetlands?

The Plan does and will continue to speak to it. We also have regulations.

Do we have to worry about the creation of a tunnel affect with buildings being erected closer to the street and much higher?

This type of model has been working very well in Europe for years. There has also been talk about creating boulevard effects on Dixwell Avenue and the other major arteries but it requires CT DOT approval.

What is the percentage of commercial vs. residential property and does it fall in line with North Haven or surrounding towns?

We are going to take the new demographic data, do an analysis and compare it to other towns. North Haven has a bigger industrial and commercial section than Hamden.

We also have to look at what is happening to the general population which is aging. Contrary to stereo types of retirees moving south – more are staying in the same town, not necessarily the same home, so we need to look at the nature and demand of housing and realize it will change as well as the types of services that will be required of an aging population. We will be looking at things regionally.

Additionally, Hamden is growing in population with 63,000+ residents.

We have seen some business growth but we were hurt by the recession.

We asked the attendees to give some thoughts to their 5 LIKES & DISLIKES about Hamden. The following is a list of what was raised:

LIKES	DISLIKES
The Library. It is well run, well stacked and has a lot of media. Likes LION	No outdoor swimming
We have great parks. Some need some maintenance fixes but in general they are nice.	“You cannot get there from here.” There is a lot of traffic on Dixwell Avenue.
Likes that the Town is comprised of many small neighborhoods	People speed and run traffic lights. It is very difficult to cross Dixwell Avenue
Enjoy the Farmer’s markets	Quinnipiac Housing in northern Hamden
There are great programs held at Town Center Park – they are maintaining the vitality of the Town.	In the months of April and October the Town looks terrible due to bulk trash pick-up. While this is something that residents take advantage of and like having the service, the town tends to look like a dump, especially when the debris is not picked up timely and often runs into November. Would prefer to have bulk trash pick-up by appointment only and to fine those who put their trash out without an appointment.
We are a very diverse town. There are people here from every part of the world.	
We have a good education system	
The Town hall garage finally opened	
We have very good Police and Fire Departments	

Notes on POCD discussion taken by Michele Mastropetre, President of the Dunbar Hill Civic Association.